

UNEMPLOYMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Q: How does Federal supplemental support effect unemployment assistance in Hawaii?

A: Starting from their first week of unemployment and ending August 1, 2020, \$300 per week will be available for eligible workers in Hawaii from the Federal government to supplement state unemployment. The Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) is working with the U.S. Department of Labor to determine how best to administer the program. The \$300 additional benefit amount will be retroactively added to eligible weeks of unemployment once program modifications are completed, but will only last for a few weeks.

Q: I have not been able to create an unemployment insurance account. Does this mean that I will lose out on available benefits?

A: DLIR has been experiencing an extraordinarily high volume of users attempting to file claims. DLIR is working continuously to upgrade its telephonic and web server capacity. If you have trouble getting through, please try again. Technical difficulties may initially prevent you from filing your initial claim or your weekly claim certifications. However, your unemployment benefits will be backdated to the date you were separated from your job or had your hours reduced, not the date on which you were able to file your claim with DLIR.

Q: Will the additional payment of \$300 weekly unemployment benefits be taxable?

A: Yes. Regular unemployment insurance is taxed as income, as are the expanded temporary unemployment benefits established in the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* (P.L. 116-136) and Federal “Assistance Program for Lost Wages”.

Q: Will individuals already on Hawaii state unemployment insurance be able to extend their coverage under the CARES Act?

A: Yes. If you exhaust the weeks of unemployment compensation available to you through Hawaii law, you will be eligible for an additional 13 weeks of benefits as a result of the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* (P.L. 116-136). These benefits will be federally funded, but you will still receive them through the state. The extension will occur automatically for those who were on benefits as of the effective date of the CARES Act. Work search requirements have been waived by the Governor.

Q: How do I file for unemployment benefits as a self-employed worker or independent contractors?

A: The *CARES Act* provides \$260 billion to expand unemployment assistance, for which self-employed and part time workers will also be eligible. To begin your application process, please visit the DLIR website: pua.hawaii.gov. Even if you were initially denied benefits, DLIR will be able to reassess your application on this new platform.

Q: Are all individuals eligible for unemployment insurance regardless of their immigration status?

A: Unemployment benefits are available to those workers who are authorized to work in the United States.